

Department of Auditor-Controller

Children's Group Home Ombudsman Activity Report

March 2013

Total Calls	<u>19</u>	General Statistics			
		Youth Callers		Time of Youth Calls	
Calls returned within one business day	<u>19</u>	Female	<u>9</u>	AM	<u>4</u>
Calls resolved within 30 business days	<u>19</u>	Male	<u>4</u>	PM	<u>9</u>
Follow-up calls	<u>48</u>				
		Total Youth Callers	<u>13</u>		
		Total Adult Callers	<u>6</u>		

CALLS RELATING TO:

Collaboration Contacts/Referrals/Information

Probation referral	<u>1</u>
DCFS - ILP Coordinator	<u>1</u>
Foster Care Ombudsman	<u>1</u>
Group Home	<u>3</u>
General Inquiries	<u>2</u>
TOTAL:	<u>8</u>

Personal Rights

<u> </u> Allowance	<u> </u> Health/Med, Dental, Psych Care
<u> </u> Clothing/Personal Property	<u>1</u> Respect (<i>Dream Home Care</i>)
<u>2</u> Contact (<i>David & Margaret</i>)	<u> </u> School/Community/Religious Svcs
<u> </u> Food	<u> </u> Social/Family Contact
<u>1</u> Living Condition and Respect (<i>Macro Homes</i>)	<u> </u> Work/Job Skills
TOTAL: <u> </u> <u>4</u>	

Personal

<u> </u> Crime-related	<u> </u> Physical Abuse/Harm
<u> </u> Discipline	<u>2</u> Fear, Threats, Intimidation (<i>Penny Lane; Teens' Happy Homes</i>)
<u>1</u> Discrimination (<i>Aviva Center</i>)	<u> </u> Relationship
<u> </u> Emotional Issues	<u> </u> Sexual Abuse
<u> </u> Pregnancy/Infant Care	<u> </u> Substance Abuse
TOTAL: <u> </u> <u>3</u>	

Other

<u>3</u> CSW- related (<i>Penny Lane; David & Margaret (2 calls)</i>)	<u>1</u> Hair products (<i>Turmont Home for Boys</i>)
TOTAL: <u> </u> <u>4</u>	

Visits/Outreach

B & I Group Home (*2 sites*)
 Dream Home Care (*3 sites*)
 Hathaway-Sycamores (*1 site*)
 West Covina Group Home (*1 site*)

TOTAL: 7 sites

SYBIL BRAND COMMISSION MEETING

April 17, 2013

Reporting for the month of March 2013

AWOLs: There were 141 AWOLs involving 118 youth: 17 youth AWOL'ed more than once, with some AWOL'ing between 2 to 4 times.

57 remain AWOL	1 TERM
29 returned to GH	2 HOP
24 are in JH	5 CCP

Outstanding AWOL's from previous months detained in March 2013:

8 youth were arrested/detained on an outstanding bench warrant from previous months:
4 are currently in JH. 4 are in GHs.

Statistics and Findings regarding AWOLs in March 2013:

- 1) 47% of the AWOL incidents were Hispanic males with a mean age of 16.6 years. The overall average age of youth who AWOLed in March 2013, was 16.7 years. Additional stats:

- 20%- Black males with an average age of 17 years.
- 13%- Hispanic females with an average age of 16.6 years.
- 11%- Black females with an average age of 16.1 years.
- 4%- White males with an average age of 17.2 years.
- 4%- "Other" race females with an age of 17.3 years.
- 1%- White females with an average age of 15.5 years.

Recommendation:

- For the past 8 months the average age and majority race of AWOLed youth remained about the same. Therefore, for all 8 months, Hispanic males above the age of 16 were around 40% to 50% of AWOL incidents. DPOs, Therapists, or other GH and County staff, should interview at-risk youth (mainly Hispanic males around the age of 16) to find out about certain feelings related to age, gender, or cultural stresses and consider possible solutions to decrease these feelings/stresses.
 - Inform DPOs and GH staff to be aware of the demographics that are at most risk of AWOLing. Research and identify possible methods or daily practices of assisting youth to come to a less stressful state of mind.
- 2) In the previous months, a correlation was detected between the time youth AWOLs and the time it takes for the GH to report the incident and whether or not the youth remains AWOLed or is detained). To illustrate:

Correlation between these factors (dashes represent passing time, whereas, more dashes represent a longer period of time):

Time Awoled-----Time Reported-----Youth is detained either in a GH or JH.

Time Awoled-----Time Reported-----
Youth is still AWOL-----

Based on statistical findings, *the sooner the GH reports the AWOL, the more likely it is that the Youth is detained within the end of the month.* For efficiency, we can call the passing period between the AWOL incident and the notification to authorities of the incident the "**Idle Phase.**" **Idle Phase or IP can be defined as duration of time passed between any two actions.** Certain actions are dependent on each other for progress or success. In this case, the two actions are the reporting of the AWOL by the GH and the detainment of the youth. However, in March, most GHs did a great job of reporting AWOLs within an average of 1 day of occurrence. Therefore, there were no comparable correlations to see if delayed reporting had an effect on detainment.

Recommendation:

- Continue monitoring monthly trends to verify a continuing trend.
 - Reiterate to GH staff and to legal guardians of youth the importance of reporting an AWOL as soon as the incident occurs. Specifically, all AWOLs should be reported within 24 hours in order to expedite the issuance of a bench warrant and the recovery of the youth. Statistics should be shared with GH staff to illustrate the real results of delayed reporting.
- 3) Certain GHs showed a higher percentage of AWOLs than other GHs. This was determined by taking the number of AWOLs for that month and comparing it to the number of beds available in the GH (population). It is important to note that some GHs had the same youth AWOL'ing several times, but these AWOLs were all counted. **For March 2013, some GHs had a 30% or higher AWOL rate.**

4) *Recommendation:*

- Continue to track the frequency of AWOLs for each GH and see if a consistent pattern remains amongst the same group homes.
 - Several confounding factors have to be controlled to identify a direct correlation between GH treatment of youth and AWOLs. For example, a high AWOL rate for a GH could only mean that that particular GH gets higher risk youth.
 - Investigate GHs that have an unusually high number of AWOLs compared to other GHs to see possible reasons.
 - Interview youth during investigation.
 - Create a plan of action based on results (directives for GH, staff training, etc).
 - Monitor GH to see if trend has stopped after implementation of programs or directives.
- 5) This month, there was a correlation found related to IP between bench warrant requests and bench warrant issued and effect on youth detainment (**IP- duration of time passed between two actions; see item #2 for explanation**). The sooner the bench warrant was issued, the higher the chances were of the youth being detained by the end of the month. This month, 7 youth were detained for bench warrants issued within 1 day of request, 3 detained when issued within 2 days of request, 3 detained when issued within 3 days of request, 1 detained when issued within 4, 5, or 6 days of request.

Recommendation:

- Consider the importance of having a bench warrant issued as soon as possible for an AWOL'd youth. The sooner a bench warrant is issued, the more likely it is that the youth will be detained by the end of the month.
- 6) Similar to the previous month, a query was done to find if out if there was relationship between AWOLs and a lack of contact with DPO in the first seven business days of SP. 58 of the AWOLs were youth who had face to face contact within the first 7 days. 56 of the AWOLs were youth who had a face to face contact after 7 days. 27 had no face to contact prior to AWOLing. Side note: There was a spike in AWOLs in the first 3 days of placement.

Recommendation:

- Last month, The data showed 70% of youth who AWOL'd either had their face to face after 7 days of SP or did not have a face to face at all. However, this month, only 59% fell in that category. Therefore, 41% of AWOLs were youth who *did* have a face to face within the first seven days. It seems that regardless of having face to face contact with a DPO, AWOL trends stay the same. Recommendation is to continue tracking this data to see how it fluctuates.
- 7) Patterns regarding suitable placement dates and AWOL dates were also noted. Here is the data for March:

March 2013:

20% AWOLed within 7 days of SP
13.5% AWOLed between 7 and 14 days of SP
6% AWOLed between 14 and 21 days of SP
8% AWOLed between 21 and 28 days of SP
52% AWOL'd after 28 days in SP

- 8) **Final Remarks on AWOLs:** Similar to last month, all 'insignificant' AWOLs were also incorporated into the data this month (i.e. youth AWOL'ing for an hour). Therefore, the findings/correlations may have slightly shifted in different patterns compared to previous months. However, certain trends relating to race, age, and sex continued to mirror the previous months' data. DPO and number of AWOLs per DPO were also tracked, but not included in this report. There are other trends that could be revealed, such as correlation between Gang affiliation and AWOLing or incidents.

iTrack (SIRs):

There were no child deaths or suicide attempts reported for the month of December in iTrack. The largest category for SIRs continued to be "other", providing no description of the type of incident the youth was involved in.

Recommendation:

- Instruct all iTrack users to NOT select the category "other," unless incident undeniably does not belong under any specific category. Another

option is to remove the category "other," and instead add additional specific categories (once it is determined why users are selecting "other"). Probation is currently discussing improvement ideas regarding iTrack with ISD software managers.

GROUP HOME MONITORING AND INVESTIGATIONS:

Current:

Phoenix House is off of Investigative Hold, as of April 10, 2013. The Investigative HOLD was imposed on their agency on March 13, 2013, the Review Conference was completed on April 5, 2013, and a CAP was received on April 8, 2013.

Child Abuse, we had 2 referrals, of which, one was **Unfounded** for General Neglect and the other one is **Inconclusive** for General Neglect.

Allegation was **Unfounded** for General Neglect. Youth's mother alleged that the GH staff are not feeding him enough food, providing him with enough shoes and clothes and that her civil rights are being violated due to her not consenting to her son taking psychotropic medication.

Allegation was **Inconclusive**. A DCFS youth alleged in court that youth smoke "meth" in their bedrooms, as staff improperly supervises the residents.

Group Home Investigations:

We had 8 Group Home investigations during the month of March 2013, 6 were **Substantiated**, and 2 were **Unfounded**.

Allegation was Substantiated. GH was placed on "lock-down" status and Probation was not informed.

Allegation was Unfounded. A former GH staff made allegations against the GH, stating that an incident was not reported . . . a staff was driving the facility van while watching TV on his cell phone . . . that staff quit. The former employee that made the allegation stated that he was the whistle blower and was mistreated after reporting the incident. He reported the incident to all Probation Departments; however, no LA County youth were in the vehicle; therefore, no failure to report.

Allegation was Substantiated. GH failed to notify Probation Directors of a serious incident that occurred on a weekend. GH failed to properly report details of a serious incident in the incident report. GH failed to notify the Probation OD Line in a timely manner. GH failed to take safety precautions with a youth that had just carried out self-harm, as a result, the youth rolled out of a moving vehicle on the freeway. GH was placed on HOLD.

Allegation was Substantiated. Improper dispensing of medication to a youth, which resulted in the youth taking his medication to school and the teacher confiscated it.

Allegation was Substantiated. GH failed to properly report a serious incident, lacking in detail, one sentence.

Allegation was Substantiated. GH did not follow proper protocol when dropping off a youth for a weekend pass, as a result the youth ran off to a local liquor store and was grazed by a bullet in a drive-by shooting.

Allegation was Substantiated. GH failed to properly report a serious incident in a timely manner.

Allegation was Unfounded. Female neighbor made a complaint against the GH accusing a GH staff of driving too close to her car and blocking her driveway.

Monitoring:

We have **15** posted, **8** are still in various stages of approval, (total of 23 for the 2011-2012 year). Monitoring assignments are well underway for 2012-2013 year.

Permanency-

We are in various stages of preparation for **4 potential adoptions** (2 are in the active phase and 2 are in the planning stages). **1** of the adoptions, parental rights was terminated on March 28, 2013, and the Adoption is scheduled for June 4, 2013, in Department 271.

5 potential legal guardianships are currently in the planning stages.

In March 2013, we completed **0** Adoptions and **0** Legal Guardianships.